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17 March 1977

MEMORANDUM FOR: Walter Elder
Executive Secretary, NFIB

FROM : Sayre Stevens
Deputy Director for Intelligence

SUBJECT : NFIB Concurrence in Unclassified
Release of Interagency Intelligence
Memorandum on the Soviet Civil
Defense Program

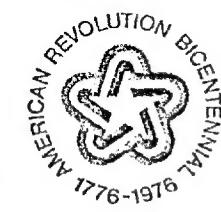
The Director of Central Intelligence has requested
telephonic concurrence by NFIB Principals as soon as
possible in the unclassified release of the attached
Interagency Intelligence Memorandum on the Soviet
Civil Defense Program.

[Redacted]

Sayre Stevens

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The Soviet Civil Defense Program

This paper is an effort by the Director of Central Intelligence to lay out in unclassified form the essentials of our knowledge about Soviet civil defense programs. We cannot, at this time, make a comprehensive assessment of the potential effectiveness of the Soviet civil defense program, but we can make some confident qualitative assessments which help to keep the problem in perspective.

--We know that the Soviets have an ambitious program and we have a good understanding of their overall civil defense doctrine and organization.

We lack important details about specific plans, programs, and objectives.

--We know that the Soviets are taking some action with respect to all aspects of civil defense. We lack evidence on the progress they are making in many of their preparations.

--Some analysts of this problem have reached alarming conclusions by assuming that the Soviets

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have, in fact, implemented all the measures called for in their civil defense manuals. Our evidence on the actual status of Soviet preparations, however, indicates that this is not the case.

--On the other hand, the activity we see clearly reflects an effort on the part of the USSR to improve its ability to survive a nuclear war. The Soviet program is much more than a "paper plan" as some have suggested.

I. Circumstances

The adequacy of Soviet civil defense must be judged against different levels of possible counter-attack by the United States ranging from attack by the full inventory of US strategic weapons to attack by the reduced number that would be expected to survive a Soviet first strike. For purposes of this analysis a "worst case" (a reduced US retaliatory capability) is assumed. We have also assumed that the Soviets would have had at least a week to implement civil defense preparations.

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The Soviet calculation of their own civil defense effectiveness would be a much more conditional one and would have to include such factors as whether extensive preparations and evacuation of cities would provide warning to the US and hence cause an increase in the number of weapons which could be used in retaliation or a change in the targetting of these weapons.

II. Parameters

The following are basic criteria for measuring the effectiveness of civil defense:

1. Ability to protect key government leaders.
2. Ability to protect the population as a whole.

 --evacuation

 --sheltering

 --sustenance

3. Ability to protect economic capacity for post-war recovery.

 --industrial facilities

 --essential personnel

 --strategic reserves

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III. Protection of Leadership

Within a broad range of possible US weapons allocation, the existing Soviet civil defense endeavors probably would insure the survival of a large percentage of the military and civilian leaders needed to maintain government and party control.

IV. Protection of the Population

Soviet plans for the evacuation of cities are feasible. Evacuation to rural areas would be critical to population survival because hardened shelters, including subways, currently available in the cities would accommodate only a small fraction of the total population--probably no more than five or ten percent of the population in most cities.

Under the favorable conditions of warning time as enumerated above, and with effective evacuation procedures, immediate casualties to the urban population could be reduced to a small percentage. Soviet plans calling for evacuees to build their own crude shelters when they arrive in rural areas are also technically feasible. The quality of fallout protection for evacuees probably would vary widely.

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Soviet stocks of food and fuel are widely distributed throughout the country, rather than being concentrated in major urban centers. Most of these stocks have no special protection. The identified special grain storage bunkers could provide for only some three percent of annual peacetime food-grain consumption and represent less than one percent of total Soviet grain storage capacity. Owing to the widespread locations of normal storage facilities, however, large quantities of grain could be expected to survive an attack. It is believed that the surviving population could be fed for at least weeks and probably months from existing stocks.

Some analysts have employed data of a single urban area--the best information we have--to extrapolate shelter capacity for the entire USSR. We doubt that this is a valid technique because our evidence indicates that the pace of the shelter program is not uniform across the whole of the USSR. Nevertheless, such a calculation (incorporating uncertainties in data) leads to the following estimates of the percentage of population which could currently be housed in hardened shelters.

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Total Population	1-3%
Urban population	2-7%
Urban Work Force	3-13%
Essential Workers	7-27%

This sort of estimate could easily be wrong by a factor of two either way (from half to double).

A similar simplified extrapolation to future capability, based on very limited information about construction rates, indicates that the above numbers could be roughly doubled in about ten years.

No agency of the intelligence community has officially estimated the numbers of population which they believe the Soviet program would protect.

V. Protection of the Economy

While light industry has been dispersed somewhat in the USSR, heavy industry remains concentrated in large urban areas. The industrial expansion of the past 15 years has not significantly reduced this urban concentration, although the expansion of plants and cities has had some dispersing effect.

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There is little evidence that the Soviets have made extensive preparations to harden individual industrial facilities. The amount of effort required to protect key industrial equipment would range from moderate--heavy machines such as lathes and milling equipment, for example, are relatively hard to disable--to extensive--chemical plants have a complex arrangement of interdependent equipment.

The Soviets are concentrating on the protection of essential workers in key industries rather than protecting the population at large. Defense formations, trained to restore damaged industry to operation, exist at many facilities.

The Soviets maintain reserves of industrial materials, and large quantities of material are normally in the production pipeline.

VI. Training for Civil Defense

Increased emphasis has been given to civil defense training in the Soviet Union over the past five years.

The growth in training has been gradual, however, and

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there is no evidence of a crash program. Some special training facilities have been constructed, but most training is conducted at improvised sites. Training to date appears to be directed to the preparation of civil defense leaders rather than to the individual preparation of the entire population.

VII. The Soviet Perspective

As indicated, we have many uncertainties about the facts of the Soviet civil defense program. The Soviets themselves, in considering any actions which depend on the protection afforded by their civil defenses, would have to consider many uncertainties in its effectiveness. Some of these factors are not under Soviet control. Among the uncertain factors the Soviets would have to contemplate are:

--Climate and weather during evacuation could have a large influence on the ability of the population to shelter and sustain itself outside urban areas.

--The details of the US attack would influence which leaders survived, which economic facilities were destroyed, and how much radioactive fallout was produced to cause post-attack fatalities.

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--Distribution of food, medical care, industrial supplies, etc., would be at least as critical to recovery as the materials themselves.

VIII. Conclusion

It is not the conclusion of the DCI or any agency of the intelligence community that the Soviets today possess a civil defense capability that would enable them to feel that they could absorb a retaliatory strike from the United States with a reasonable expectation of limiting damage to an acceptable level.

However, the fact that the Soviet Union is currently making a far more substantial investment in civil defense than the United States must be considered. The least it indicates is that Soviet leaders feel that they must make some preparation for the possibility of strategic nuclear warfare. This does not necessarily mean that they are planning to initiate such warfare; it does mean that they apparently are thinking through the consequences of the possibility of some exchange of nuclear weapons and their consequent need to plan for a post-attack recovery. This is in contrast with general attitudes in the western world where the emphasis is almost exclusively on the deterrence of nuclear warfare.

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